



## Background Document 2

**Regional Forum on Local Water Governance  
“Water is every body’s business”,**

**Emerging Challenges – Case studies from Palestine, Jordan and  
Egypt**

**June 6+7, 2007- Amman**

**EMPOWERS Country Teams**



**Emerging Challenges – Case studies from Palestine, Jordan and Egypt**  
**“Water is every body’s business”,**  
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## ***1. Emerging challenges to water governance***

Within the three countries where the EMPOWER partnership worked, as well as more broadly in the Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) region, a number of critical challenges to participatory water governance can be identified. These include:

- **Fragmented decision-making.** Responsibility for water-related decision-making is spread across different line departments;
- **Lack of reliable information.** Although large amounts of water-related information exist, the quality is variable and/or the information is out of date.
- **Poor access to information.** As information is collected and stored by many different organisations, accessibility to information when and where it is needed is poor. In particular, stakeholders at the village-level rarely have access to or copies of water-related information that is specific to their village
- **Focus on technological solutions.** There is a tendency for technological solutions to be used whenever there are water supply problems regardless of the causes of these problems.
- **Limited stakeholder participation or representation.** Most water-related decision-making takes place without stakeholder participation or meaningful consultative processes.
- **Lack of accountability and transparency.** Water-related decision-making is inherently political and, as a consequence, water-related decision-making processes can be and often are subverted as a result of political involvement. Lack of clarity regarding the accountability of service providers to users, and of transparency in how and why decisions are made lends itself to abuse of the management process.

The table on the following page, summarizes some of the main governance related issues in each of the three EMPOWERS focus countries, including the current level of user involvement

Country	Degree of de-centralisation	Degree of privatisation of water supply/ sanitation	Degree to which consumer bears full cost of supply	Involvement of consumer in management issues
<b>Egypt</b>	Water distribution at the national level is centralized due to the nature of the hydrologic system in Egypt (one river). Policy exists for decentralisation and a gradual transfer of the management to the users at the canal and mesqa levels, although most decisions and budgets still made at the national level.	Private septic tank services in small towns/ rural areas. Drinking water supply is semi-privatized and vested in a Holding Company	All water supply is subsidized. Cost recovery is implemented to recover operation and maintenance costs: new Lands pay for full transmission cost, old lands only pay to pump water from canal	Traditionally only relating to distribution on own land. WUAs now assist in local canal cleaning, management in a few areas, and Water Boards are being established. Over 7000 WUA's and 220 Water Boards exist currently.
<b>Jordan</b>	Devolving of budgeting and works to governorate, but few substantive decisions taken below national level	Public sector responsible for sewerage network, private sector for septic tanks. Privatized water supply in Amman and Aqaba, elsewhere public sector; in rural areas drinking water provided by private tankers when no connection to system	Highly subsidised irrigation water in Jordan valley, paid but subsidised elsewhere Domestic water paid for with stepped tariff, and with subsidy for the poor	Water committees for some areas, water user associations in Jordan valley. Water rights with land, farmers participate in irrigation management and to maintain private wells, canals; aquifers belong to government.
<b>Palestinian Authority</b>	All decisions on supply taken by Israeli government.	Private service for septic tanks and drinking water by tankers. Municipalities responsible for networked supply.	Users pay full cost of domestic water and subsidised cost of irrigation	Establishment of village councils to represent end users but no input to supply or demand management yet.

Against these challenges, can be set a number of opportunities and strengths that can be built upon to move towards improved local water governance, these include:

- Generally favourable policies: across the region, the policy environment is shifting to one that is sympathetic to, or actively supports, decentralized and participatory governance. The challenge is therefore to build on and use this policy space to create real improvements.
- A strong technical cadre at decentralized levels: In general, the region possesses a well qualified group of technicians at decentralized levels. The challenge is therefore primarily one of change – rather than absolute creation of capacity. Technicians need to be strengthened in their ability to work with water users, and supported in shifting their role from implementation to support in more participatory modes.
- Widespread awareness of the water crisis: Throughout the region, there is deep cultural awareness of the scarcity and value of water. This can be built on to form a sound basis for participation in water related decision making.
- Growing space for civil society and the private sector: Despite a tradition of rather centralized and state-dominated provision of services, there is increasing recognition of the need for other actors to be involved, both civil society and the private sector. This provides an opportunity to create the necessary capacity in NGOs (particularly) to play a leading role in local water governance

This Background Document will focus on how stakeholder coordination, decentralization and local level participation can be improved. It will support discussions by the presentation of three case studies in which stakeholder coordination is addressed at three different levels: local level (Qabatia in Palestine), the Governorate level (Balqa in Jordan) and the interaction between national level and district level (Ehnasia in Egypt).

## ***2. A participatory approach to strategic water planning - a short background to EMPOWERS***

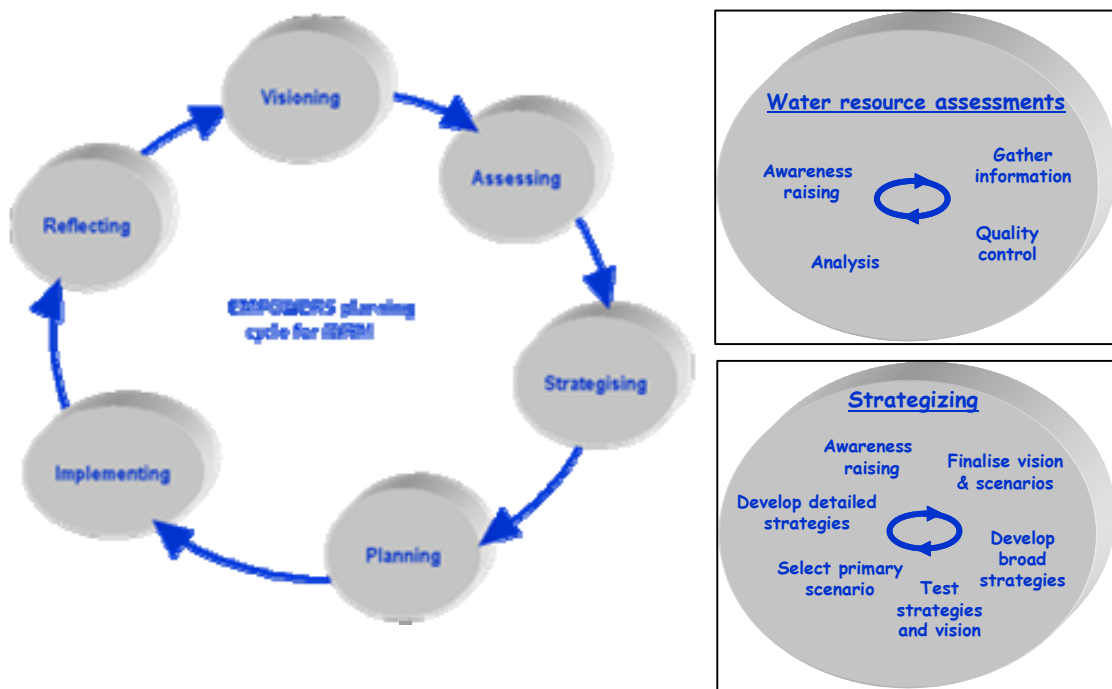
EMPOWERS is a four year regional programme for local water management in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine, funded by the EC MEDA Water Programme and CARE International. It comprises a Regional Partnership of fourteen organizations with the goal of empowering local people and improving long-term access to water by local communities. The main long-term objective of the project is to improve development and management of water resources at the intermediate and local level by promoting increased participation and representation of stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes, leading in turn to improved local water governance<sup>1i</sup>. While focusing on districts and local communities, EMPOWERS ensures the relevance of local IWRM activities to national policy formulation through the involvement in the work of national steering committees. EMPOWERS also operates a Regional Information Programme from the office of one of its partners in Jordan (INWRDAM), to disseminate information that relates to local water governance via a web site, newsletters, exchange visits and regional events.

EMPOWERS strongly advocates and implements an approach of Stakeholder Dialogue and Concerted Action (SDCA), based on the assumption that stakeholder involvement leads to improved use and management of water resources. To this end, the project is developing a participatory planning cycle for Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). This cycle builds on the identification of water-related problems and the development of area specific long-term visions and strategies. This strategizing process is supported by the collection and analysis of relevant information on water resources, water supply infrastructure, demand for, and access to, water services and the validation of this information through a process of analysis and discussion. The aim of this planning cycle is to support stakeholders at local and intermediate levels in making the necessary technical and political decisions for developing their water resources within a transparent and commonly agreed vision. The EMPOWERS stakeholder and planning cycle approach is described in more detail in Working Papers and guidelines that can be accessed at the EMPOWERS Website: [www.empowers.info/page/120](http://www.empowers.info/page/120)

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<sup>1</sup> *Water governance* relates to the range of political, social and economic and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services at different levels of society. EMPOWERS focuses particularly on local water governance – that is governance at levels ranging from the community to district/governorate.

The EMPOWERS approaches have been tested and developed since 2003 in the Governorates of Beni Suef (Egypt), Balqa (Jordan) and Jenin (Palestine) as well as in six selected communities in each Governorate. The diagrams depict the general planning cycle and detail for two of the six principle steps. The EMPOWERS planning cycle for IWRM is based on a Programme Management Cycle approach. The activities for this planning cycle are firmly embedded in the above mentioned approach of SDCA and make extensive use of tools for stakeholder analysis such as developed in the RAAKS Guidelines<sup>ii</sup>.



The table below gives an overview of the stakeholder platforms established by EMPOWERS, from national to district level in each of the three countries. The programme has specific staff to document the learning processes, while training materials and guidelines have been developed (in Arabic and English) for use in the three targeted countries and the wider region.

### Stakeholder platforms in EMPOWERS

Egypt	Jordan	Palestine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation</li> <li><b>National Water Research Centre</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Water and Irrigation</li> <li><b>Ministry of Agriculture</b></li> <li>Ministry of Social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Palestinian Water Authority (PWA)</li> <li>Ministry of Agriculture</li> <li>Ministry of Local</li> </ul>

• Ministry of Agriculture	Development	Government
• Potable Water Authority in Beni Suef Governorate	• Ministry of Interior in Balqa Governorate	• Environmental Quality Authority
• <b>DRTPC/University of Cairo</b>	• Ministry of Planning	• <b>Palestine Hydrological Group</b>
• <b>Egyptian Water Partnership</b>	• <b>INWRDAM</b>	• <b>Union of Agricultural Work Committees</b>
• <b>CEOSS</b>	• <b>CARE Jordan</b>	• <b>CARE WBG</b>
• <b>CARE Egypt</b>		

In bold face the 12 EMPOWERS partners facilitating the SDCA in the three countries. The entire Regional Programme of EMPOWERS is supported by IRC and CARE International.

### ***3. From policy to practice***

In many of the countries of the MENA region decentralization, participation of end-users and the need to involve civil society have been incorporated in formal policy documents. More specifically issues such as increased benefits for end users and increased responsibilities and rights and access to water by the poor are generally recognized as important from a poverty reduction point of view. However, great challenges remain around how to translate such policy space into operational terms: to enable practical changes in HOW resources are managed and services delivered by government officials (and others) at the Governorate and District level. Tackling the HOW of improved local water governance, requires methodologies and approaches to be developed and tested, while decentralization in theory to be accompanied by the necessary resources, knowledge, operational instruments and staff. Capacity building of large numbers of both Government and NGO staff in genuinely participatory approaches has still to be started throughout the region. Most of these measures require more coordination and dialogue than in the past, between different stakeholders at the same level of operation, be it at the Governorate, District or Municipality level. Enforcement of existing legislation is only possible when the necessary knowledge and methods are internalized in the relevant implementing bodies and their respective staff.

EMPOWERS has worked explicitly on the HOW of decentralised water governance, especially on building the capacities and attitudes of the intermediate and local level, developing practical and user-friendly methodologies that can be easily replicated. At the same time it has explored what the requirements for a culture of communication and change to enable local people – and especially women and the poor – to be involved and

empowered in planning and decision-making over the use of resources on which they depend. This has been worked on primarily through a process of facilitated dialogue and coordination. Of especial interest have been the advances made in better communication between, on the one hand, government officials in different departments, and on the other between people from local communities and government staff.

In this forum it is proposed to give the issue of better stakeholder coordination more thought, especially in its relationships to decentralization, end-user participation and improved planning and decision making. For this three case studies have been prepared as an entry point for discussion and debate. Three key questions are proposed to guide the further discussions:

- How can stakeholder coordination be put into practice at the village level to make water interventions economically more effective?
- How can stakeholder coordination affect and make more effective decentralization at the Governorate level?
- How can stakeholder coordination affect the economic (poverty) impact of national programmes in the water sector at the district level?

In the following sections the three case studies are presented. The case study from Palestine deals with stakeholder coordination at the local level, while that from Jordan looks at stakeholder coordination at the Governorate level. The third case study focuses on the interaction of different levels of stakeholder coordination in Egypt.

## ***4. Case studies***

### **4.1 Stakeholder coordination and economic use of water resources in Qabatya town / Palestine**

#### **Background:**

The town of Qabatya was one of the three target communities in the first stage of EMPOWERS project. Qabatya is the biggest town in Jenin Governorate in terms of population and area, with a population in mid 2003 of about 15,000 people. Agricultural land takes up about 92% of the 55,000 donums of the town area.

#### **Problem statement:**

Qabatya is faced by several challenges that must be overcome to achieve more effective and economic use of local water resources. These include:

- Limited water resources and water services for domestic use within the municipality
- Limited participation of end users and other stakeholders in decision-making and planning.
- Management of agricultural water that is restricted to well-owners and farmers.
- No role for women in decision-making.
- Weak relationships between the municipality and other local and international organizations
- Available financial resources could be better used

#### **Overcoming challenges (summary of the case study):**

EMPOWERS is involving national level stakeholders in order to ensure that local activities relate to national policy formulation. To a significant extent, applying the EMPOWERS project cycle enhanced the work atmosphere and in turn contributed in overcoming the above challenges. The main steps applied are summarized in the following:

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- Stakeholder participation: Through many meetings and workshops conducted in the municipality, participants identified all the relevant stakeholders of the town's water

sector. Stakeholders include farmers, inhabitants, women, well owners, owners of stone-cutting factories, youth club, influential local people, in addition to the municipality staff.

- Problem tree analysis: With the participation of all stakeholders, a problem tree of the water sector in the town was constructed and analyzed.
- Assessing water resources: A water resource assessment of Qabatya municipality was carried out in collaboration with all stakeholders, using the RIDA (Resources, Infrastructure, Demand and Access) framework.
- Visioning: Participants formulated a commonly shared SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) vision.

*“By 2010 every one in Qabayia will have access to domestic water of 120 l/c/d of a good quality instead of the 50 l/c/d nowadays, while enough water for the agricultural purposes will be available by increasing the 3,604 donums of irrigated area to include more from the 41,394 donums of planted area every year. At the same time a substantial reduction will be realized in the contamination of groundwater that is caused by pollution of the water sources from wastewater cesspits, from agricultural activities (excessive fertilizer use and poor disposal of agricultural waste), and from the stone cutting areas”.*

- Scenario building: following this, stakeholders identified those factors that were the same time most important and most uncertain with regards to this vision, and used these to identify four different possible future situations (scenarios). These critical factors were considered to be the Israeli licenses for use of water resources and infrastructure and availability of funding.
- Strategies and pilot projects: Based on the vision and scenarios, strategies to achieve the vision were identified. Using these strategies, and with the participation of all stakeholders, priority activities and projects were identified. The first of these in Qabatya was the replacement of the water network's meters. While the second was the study and redesign of the water supply system in the town.

## Results:

- Stakeholder dialogue and concerted action: The facilitation processes that were used in the several workshops and meetings assisted to create a genuine dialogue between the different stakeholders.
- Establishing farmers' society: Through numerous workshops held with farmers, who discussed problems and solutions, farmers decided to build a unified body to defend their rights and improve dealings with institutions working in the. As a result, farmers have established an Agricultural Society that has recently obtained its license.
- Establishing a women's society: A Women's Society was created and is currently one of the more active institutions in the town. It has helped much of the work and activities of EMPOWERS.
- Enhancing water quality: Based on the dialogue between the end users of the public water supply system and the Municipality Water Division, the Water Division has become more receptive to complaints from citizens. One frequent source of complaints was related to the colour of water supplied. The Water Division identified the cause as corrosion of some network pipelines, and solved the problem by replacing the old pipes with new ones.
- Reducing un-accounted for water: By replacing the old water meters that depend on water speed with new ones that depend on water volume, the amount of un-accounted water was reduced by a considerable proportion. This led to higher water revenues for the Municipality that in turn is being used to connect poorer households in the community to the drinking water network.
- External funding: Through workshops, in which all stakeholders participated, prospects for cooperation between the municipality and external institutions have been improved. Currently, CARE International (independently of the EMPWOWERS project) has provided funding for the replacement of old water pipes and the partial rehabilitation of the water network. The French Consulate has financed a number of activities and projects aimed at developing and raising the efficiency of workers in the Water Division and establishing a data bank at the municipality. In addition, it has assisted the farmers' society to improve the management of water sources by installing water meters at agricultural wells.
- Raising capacity of Municipality Water Division staff: The study of the water resources and water services of Qabatya showed that the water division staff needed training to raise its work efficiency. As a response to this requirement, the municipality council has nominated staff to follow many training courses. This in turn

has reflected positively on the work of the Water Division and has created higher confidence in the workplace.

### **The impacts:**

By applying the EMPOWERS approach, changes have appeared through improving the level of integration and participation of the stakeholders, unifying the agricultural work in the farmers' society, as well as strengthening the role of women and their participation in decision-making. In addition, it has improved access to water services, improved the responsiveness of the municipality to citizens concerns, enhanced further development of the relationship with the institutions operating in the region and raised the efficiency of Municipality workers.

The stakeholder dialogue has succeeded in overcoming obstacles in the access to water by the poorer households by coming to compromises (on fee payment) that otherwise would not have been possible: extra municipality revenues from improved water meters (that raised the water bill in those households) were used to finance the connection to other households.

### **Recommendations (for policy):**

1. Build the capacities of government and NGO staff to provide the expertise and knowledge to link national policies to local needs.
2. Promote skills to facilitate stakeholder participatory dialogue in municipal staff and organizations so as to assist in finding appropriate solutions for identified problems in a concerted way. Facilitation processes also open prospects for cooperation with other institutions and enhance the mobilization of external funding opportunities.
3. Strengthen the role of the marginalized (the poor, women) as this is important to improve water distribution services and maintain water resources.
4. Stakeholder participation in all stages of work can contribute effectively to accepting the introduction of new techniques despite the fact that these may raise costs to the citizen. Stakeholder coordination at the community level should be supported by national policies
5. In view of the low cost involved in facilitating development processes and the apparently high financial and economic returns, institutional efforts need to be made to promote such facilitation.

## 4.2 Stakeholder coordination and Decentralization at Governorate level in the water sector in Balqa'a Governorate, Jordan

### Background

In recent years, Jordan has embarked upon a process of decentralization of authority and responsibility for the implementation of development and poverty alleviation initiatives down to governorate and municipal levels.

The Governorate Development Programme (GovDP) and the Municipality Reform Plan (MRP) provide an indication of the trend towards the devolution of authority to promote social and economic development to a sub-national level. Both initiatives are in their infancy but they are receiving significant support from both national decision makers and international donors.

There is an underlying assumption that a process of decentralization is required to remove some of the blockages that currently prevent macro-economic policies from leading to substantive progress at the micro-level. Classic analysis holds that the removal of such obstacles requires intervention at the intermediate levels of governance (those closest to the people) in order to open up decision making and to bring it closer to those whom it directly affects, on the assumption that officials at the sub-national level, whether appointed or elected, are more likely to be more responsive to local voices. Similarly local people are likely to be better informed concerning decisions that affect their well-being. This empowers them to demand improvement where there is evidence of poor performance.

### Problem Statement:

Local government actions can energize communities, and community engagement can improve local government performance on multiple levels. Despite inherent synergy between decentralization and community-driven development, in practice there are often divergent tendencies. Decentralization reforms are often erratic with political devolution of powers, but without the necessary economic devolution and capacity building to enable local governments to carry out their new mandates effectively (World Bank, Public Sector Governance: Decentralization Website).

The devolution of authority to the governorate level in Jordan was limited to administrative powers in which the planning, implementation and monitoring of the local development responsibilities is placed in the hands of the local government specifically through the governor and the executive council of the governorate. This decentralization of decision making is not entirely effective because the local government lacks control over financial issues and remains tied to the centre in sourcing financing for development projects.

#### **Overcoming challenges (summary of the case study)**

The EMPOWERS programme assumes that higher stakeholder involvement leads to improved use and management of water resources. Improved management implies taking better account of users needs and engenders collective responsibility for interventions in the water sector. The participatory planning cycle developed and tested by EMPOWERS builds on the identification of water-related problems and the development of area specific long-term visions and strategies for water resource development. This strategizing process is supported by the collection and analysis of relevant information on water resources, water supply infrastructure, actors, demand for, and access to, water resources and services and the validation of this information. Thus local and Governorate stakeholders are supported in making the technical and political decisions to develop and manage their water resources with the active participation of water users.

The EMPOWERS approach focuses on strategic planning at the governorate and community level to build the capacity of the local government to be able to fulfil its responsibilities and new role, while focusing in a single sector that is vital for a country like Jordan, with the possibility to subsequently expand to other sectors. At the heart of this challenge lies the issue of better sharing and use of information; vertically - between levels and scales; and horizontally, between different user groups and sectors at the same level and scale.

The approach and methodology facilitated by the EMPOWERS team is easy to use and effective in bringing out key issues and in helping those involved to identify practical strategies for action. With the help of simple tools it brings together representative groups of end-users – both men and women, rich and poor, land owners and landless, dominant and marginalized. The planning process identifies and develops location-specific long-term visions and strategies for water resource management. These are based on a careful reflection of water-related problems and the development needs of the community. The process is supported by several tools for collecting and analyzing relevant information such

as PRA, RIDA analysis (water Resources, Infrastructure, Demand and Access), stakeholder analysis (RAAKS), and a RBA analysis of local level accountability for water management including rights/access to water<sup>iii</sup>.

The process incorporates the inevitable uncertainty of the future by developing and considering different possible scenarios against which potential strategies are assessed. All strategies have the role and participation of the end-user at their centre. The logic of possible strategies and decisions is tested through a series of discussions and reflection to test their viability. Pilot projects further check the potential of the stakeholders (who have not previously worked in this way) to further develop trust and coordination. Thus the participating stakeholders at local and intermediate levels are able to make the technical and political decisions to begin the process of effective development and management of their water resources.

Pilot projects help consolidate reflection and analysis and have been instrumental to develop trust in the process and confidence in each other. Thus the participating stakeholders at local and intermediate levels are able to make the technical and political decisions to begin a process of effective development and management of their water resources.

## **Results**

Although it is a long process, local government departments with the participation of representatives from local CBOs and government ministries are on the right track. Communication, both between different strands of government, and between government and communities is greatly improved. Widely owned strategic water plans have been developed and adopted by the Governorate and the six selected local communities. At the same time 12 small community water projects have been implemented in the communities. At the governorate level, an important activity, and also a key factor for enhancing information exchange between the governorate agencies, has been the pilot “Water Management Information System (WMIS)”. This system will collect a range of raw data from Nine directorates within five Ministries: Social Development ; Health, Environment, Agriculture, Water and Irrigation, and Interior. The system will collate and arrange this data so that it can be re-used to inform planning and policy developments as well as monitoring and evaluation of ongoing services. The aim is to develop a a decentralized information system available for use in decision-making, planning and research at different levels in the public, private and NGOs sectors, thus facilitating the availability of unified timely information

to the various sectors of the community. Ultimately this will be a community portal published on the Internet.

In addition, a wide range of necessary capacity building for local government has been addressed by EMPOWERS, including:

- Facilitating interaction and decreasing gaps between local communities and government agencies
- Working with and strengthening local communities (community development, capacity building, ability to communicate effectively with government agencies)
- Communicating with other government agencies
- Awareness raising around key water sector issues (including national policy)
- Familiarization with EMPOWERS approaches (SDCA, RAAKS, PTD, PRA, Participatory Planning framework...)

## **Impact**

The impact of EMPOWERS work with Balqa'a governorate can be summarised as:

- Participation in decision-making by communities is quickly becoming the norm.
- Management practices and skills in key government agencies have been greatly strengthened
- Restructuring of organizations in the light of decentralization is ongoing, supported by improved access to information
- There is a general elevation of levels of social awareness due to improved accessibility to information.

## **Recommendations**

To reach the stage of full decentralization the capacity building of the local government must include the following elements:

- Increasingly, evidence suggests the importance of forging partnerships between CBOs and local government - where CBOs work alongside constitutionally established and procedurally delimited local government, the utility of both entities can be enhanced. Local government can be well grounded and organically connected with the citizens they serve, and CBOs can help citizens to connect more constructively with larger processes of state.
- Designing local government strategic planning processes to reduce capture and build transparency and accountability.

- Broadening local government decision-making towards local governance by involving other stakeholders including civil society.

Partnering can help CBOs promote external linkages, enhance effectiveness and reduce costs, while local governments can gain through expanding service delivery and deepening the participation of citizens in local activities. However, effective partnering requires addressing structural/legal flaws in local government design that impose on local government accountability or capacity, and ensuring an enabling environment for CBOs and civil society to operate.

### **4.3 Stakeholder coordination and feasibility of implementing national programmes at the District level – Ehnasia District / Beni Sueif Governorate / Egypt**

#### **Problem Statement:**

Field research was conducted with the participation of representatives from the communities involved in the EMPOWERS project (Monsha't Kassab and Al-Mosharaqah Villages). The field research was done according to the methodology of the EMPOWERS Project, based on dialogue and participation in planning and management of water resources. The research investigated water management problems relating to the implementation of the national Irrigation Improvement Project (IIP) in the two villages. The Beni Suef Irrigation Improvement Inspectorate embarked on the implementation of the Irrigation Improvement Project for Towa Canal (IIT) under the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI) national program for rationalizing water use. The IIP sets up water users associations at the mesqas and undertakes construction works to replace the old mesqas with more advanced ones using covered systems.

The problems that formed the basis of the investigation became manifest in the refusal of some farmers to use the improved mesqas (tertiary canals). This was due to a number of different reasons, particularly lack of awareness by end-users of the intended benefits of the improved mesqas, as well as a range of more technical problems.

#### **Overcoming challenges (summary of the case study):**

The methodology of the EMPOWERS Project is implemented through the application of the EMPOWERS planning cycle and the use of a range of tools to analyze information and build stakeholders capacity to undertake dialogue. One of the most efficient tools that the EMPOWERS project trained stakeholders to use for identifying and prioritizing problems was the problem tree. Problem tree analysis helped the community to identify problems related to drinking water, sanitation, and irrigation. Community members in Masharqa and Kassab villages which are located in Beni Suef Governorate tackled the problem of the Irrigation Improvement Project. It became clear through the process of drawing the irrigation problem tree and data collection that the new system that was supposed to substitute the old one was not widely used by both villages. Communities argued that they prefer their traditional system

because they were not well acquainted with the new one and were not trained in how to use it neither informed about its benefits.

Governmental stakeholders in Beni Sueif received similar training on how to apply the EMPOWERS planning cycle and the benefits of drawing the problem tree. In a later stage of the project, both community and government representatives worked together during EMPOWERS meetings, collected information, and exchanged ideas and opinions with the support of the data collected. As a result, Masharqa and Kassab representatives abandoned their hesitation and decided to engage in discussions with the government officials about the IIP. Government officials of the Irrigation and Agriculture Directorates were so impressed by the quality of these discussions that they decided to present the issue to their superiors. The officials were enthusiastic about addressing a problem that lies in their own administrations. They were convinced that there was not enough participation of the beneficiaries during the original planning which otherwise would have secured a higher level of efficiency in implementation and use of the system.

The representatives of the Central Administration of Water Resources of Beni Sueif presented research-based reports about the problems to the Head of the Irrigation Department. The urge to serve the people and maximize the benefit from IIP was conveyed to the Water Resources and Irrigation Ministry. Following this report, his Excellency Dr. Mahmoud Abu-Zeid, WRI Minister instructed the Irrigation Directorate in Beni Suef to form a committee to investigate the problem and decide on the best actions to solve it. A meeting was held by the heads of the government bodies concerned with the implementation of the Irrigation Improvement Programme. The following are the most important decisions taken by the meeting:

- Stop recovering costs from the beneficiaries of the Towa Canal II system until completing the restoration process of the Towa Canal improvement.
- Follow up works in the Towa Canal and write a bi-monthly follow-up report on achievements.

### **Stakeholders and Actions:**

The following stakeholder groups at different levels were involved in this case:

- **Village:** Groups of farmers were formed, representing all the main socio-economic groups within the community; they assembled and analyzed data on the extent of the problem, handling it objectively.

- **The Authorities concerned with Beni Suef Irrigation Improvement:** The authorities played a significant role by listening more closely to the complaints of the farmers and carrying out field visits to open up a dialogue with the communities. The Office of the Undersecretary submitted a report to the MWRI Minister informing him about the reality of what was going on in site. Moreover, by addressing the Improvement Administration, the implementers of the IIP and Water Advisory Board formed a committee to develop a plan for overcoming the drawbacks that impede the efficient use of the improved mesqas, and to set up a progress follow-up system.
- **Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation:** The MWRI Minister issued instructions to follow up on the situation through regular reports about the condition of the Towa Canal. Meetings were held by the MWRI senior officials to study the problem, supported by decisions to solve the problems of the improved Towa Canal, which were sent to Beni Seif for implementation. The Irrigation Undersecretary's Office took the responsibility for coordinating between the concerned bodies; the problem was studied and solutions were made with the participation of the Agriculture Directorate and community representatives.
- **Beni Suef Governorate:** After being informed about the problem in the local people's council of the Governorate, the Beni Suef Governor held a meeting with the irrigation officials in Beni Suef to accelerate and finish the restoration works and start the mesqas operation. He asked the members of the people's councils of the villages to be responsible for the mesqas until the activation of water users associations of each mesqa.

## Results and Impact

- The above situation led to the emergence of a group of small farmers who are able to deal with their problems logically and realistically. This change was reflected in their attitudes and way of dealing with other problems and situations.
- The most substantial change that occurred was in the method adopted by the irrigation authorities in dealing with the marginalized farmers, establishment of dialogue among the parties concerned in the problem, i.e. representatives of the farmers and the governmental officials was critical to success.
- Repairing, testing and operating some of the improved mesqas, not merely in Al-Mashareqa village but also of other mesqas at Towa Canal, with the total of 120 mesqas, in three villages and part of Ehnasia city.

- Issuing a decision by the Head of the Irrigation Department to stop the cost recovery implementation and resume it only after the completion of the restoration works of all the mesqas at the Towa Canal.
- The formation of a committee at the district level including the concerned parties to follow up and set a plan for solving the problem. The committee included representatives from the concerned communities committed to participating in planning and management (a process that made operational the participation dimension, stated as one of the components of the National Water Resources Plan).
- The implementing company has carried out the required upgrading of some mesqas, testing and delivering them to the members of the Local People's Council of the village.
- The Water Advisory Administration established some new associations at the repaired mesqas.
- For the first time village representatives were invited by the Central Administration to attend an official meeting at the Undersecretary Office, and moreover a copy of the minutes was sent to the CDA.

#### **Lessons Learned/Recommendations:**

- Providing clear and objective information had a significant importance, as it displayed the real size of the problem.
- It is vital to build the capacity of community representatives on how to identify their own problems and collect the necessary information to back up their discussion in order to influence the decision making process.
- Dialogue is imperative for problem identification and resolution.
- Activating and empowering communities is important but not enough to achieve long-term results; there should be an emphasis on both the communities and officials.
- Increasing the community members awareness of their rights and developing their capacities through EMPOWERS has enabled them to claim more effectively for their rights.
- Increasing the government officials' awareness of the rights and duties towards the farmers made them willing to help in fixing the situation when they were asked for support.
- Empowering the marginalized and poor to attain their rights and ensure their needs, within a gradual logical procedure.
- The importance of integration (communities and officials) in developing common visions which paves the way for proper planning.

- Participation of stakeholders at early planning stages increases the feasibility of projects, and ensures higher social and economic impacts.

## **5. Discussion**

The case studies will be discussed in different subgroups in the Regional Forum, Conclusions and recommendations will be summarized and inserted in this section of this Background Document.

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<sup>i</sup> Rogers, P., and Hall, A.W., (2003), *Effective Water Governance*, TEC Background Papers No. 7, Global Water Partnership, Technical Committee, Stockholm.

<sup>ii</sup> Engel, Paul and Monique Salomon, (1994). *Resource Guide to RAAKS (Rapid Analysis of Agricultural Knowledge Systems), a Participatory Actor-oriented Methodology on Networking for Innovation and Stakeholder Analysis*. KIT/CTA/STOAS, Amsterdam).

<sup>iii</sup> Laban, P. (2007). *Accountability and rights in Right-based Approaches for Local Water Governance*. In: *Water Resources Development*, Vol 23, No 2, 333-345 (June 2007). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London.